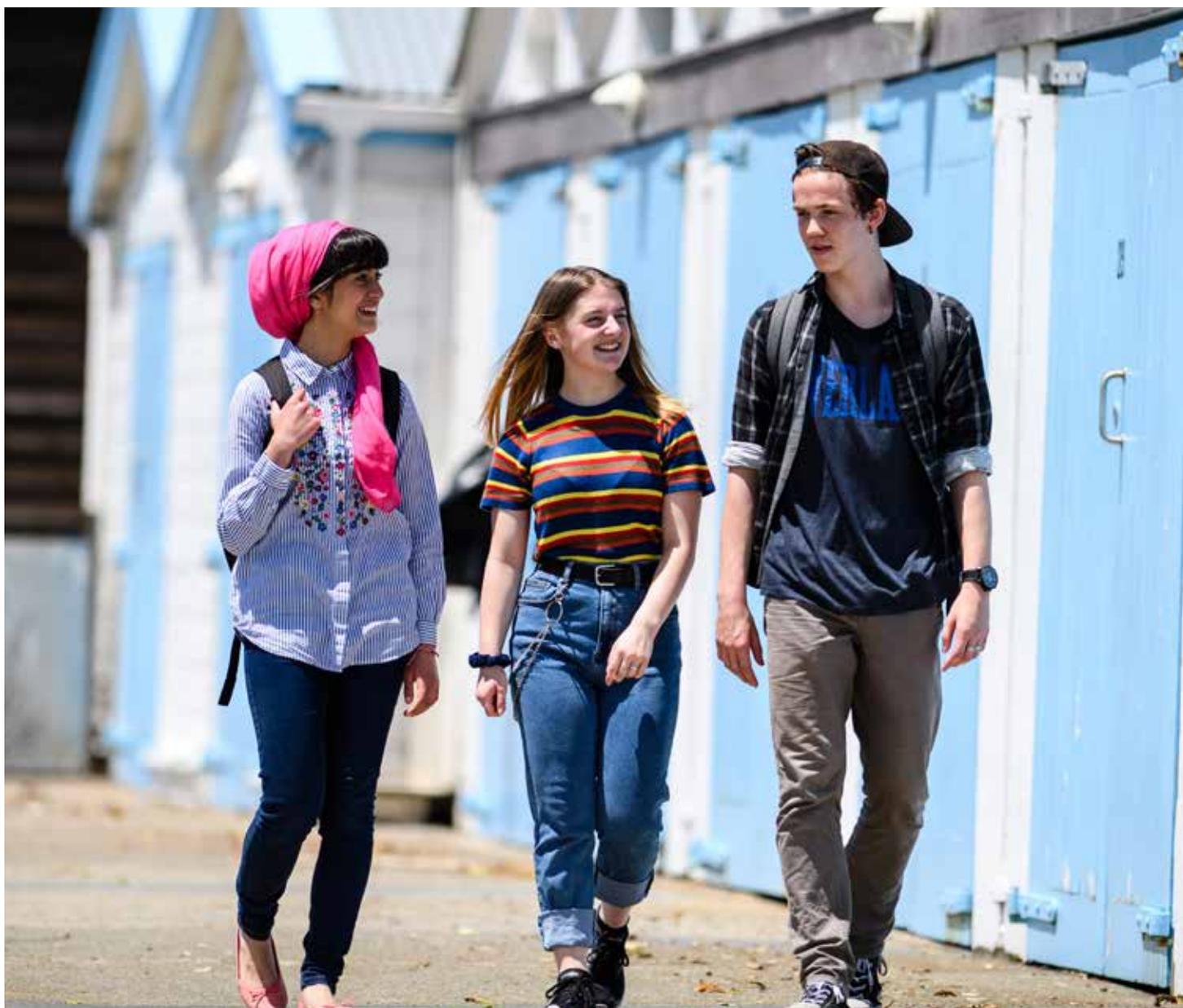


TE MANA WHAKAATU

Classification Office

Watch carefully.
Think critically.



Statement of Intent

2021 – 2025



Contents

FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF CENSOR	4
THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF OUR ACTIVITIES	5
Our purpose	5
The role of the Classification Office	5
Our structure and regulatory functions	6
Accountability and governance	6
MANAGEMENT OF THE CLASSIFICATION OFFICE	10
The Government's priorities	10
Regulatory environment	10
Social, economic and technological environment	11
Our key areas of focus	11
The public's perspective on the classification system	12
The current fiscal environment	12
Amendments to the Classification Act	12
Organisational health and capability	12
Management of significant relationships	13
Integrity of the classification system	13
MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE	14
Evaluation of our purpose	16
Evaluation of our impact	16
Evaluation of our activities	17
STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY	19
FIGURES	
Organisational chart	7
Explanation of the classification process	8
Regulatory environment	9

Foreword from the Chief Censor

How can we help New Zealanders stay safe and thrive in the digital age?

Digital media gives our nation access to vital opportunities and benefits, but there are also costs. Recently we've seen a sharp and concerning rise in harm from digital media, amplified by major technology and social changes around the world and the impacts of COVID-19.

Here in New Zealand, the 2019 Christchurch terrorist attacks were a wake-up call to how digital media can be weaponised by violent extremists in new and devastating ways. Since then we've seen growing violent extremist activity online, including the use of sophisticated techniques to recruit and radicalise people.

The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has created the conditions for a surge in fake news, disinformation, and conspiracy theories online, which are often spread by groups and even state actors with an agenda.

Today our rangatahi can access almost any digital content on their devices, and there are few safeguards. Online porn is freely accessible and young people have told us it's simply part of their world growing up. It's become common for online games aimed at young people to feature addictive gambling devices such as loot boxes. And social media continues to be popular, yet we're seeing how algorithms powering some of these platforms use behavioural insights to 'hook' people's attention, with insufficient consideration of harm.

Looking ahead to 2021-2024 it's likely that new issues will keep emerging. So what can be done?

The Classification Office has been working hard to address digital harms, and we're building momentum.

- Recently we've played a key role in driving changes to bring commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms into New Zealand's classification system. From mid-2021 these platforms will need to display New Zealand age ratings and content warnings on all films and

shows available to New Zealand viewers.

- Our three-part research series into how and why young New Zealanders use online porn has provided a strong evidence base on this issue for the first time, and shone a light on how it impacts them.
- We've ramped up our focus on education and outreach, including developing practical resources for parents, to help them guide their tamariki and rangatahi to think critically about media content. We've also used our research findings on porn to support changes to national curriculum guidelines, advise on a national information campaign 'Keep It Real Online', and to develop resources and training for educators and front-line services.
- Importantly, we've stepped up our direct engagement with young people through our Youth Advisory Panel, social media and other activities.

We're proud of this mahi, but it's clear New Zealand needs fresh thinking and a unified approach to better manage harm from digital media. As well as our core classification work, our focus for 2021-2024 will be on supporting new regulatory and non-regulatory interventions, including aligning our efforts with those of New Zealand government agencies, NGOs and experts, and staying connected with the latest and best thinking around the world on emerging issues.



David Shanks - Chief Censor





The nature and scope of our activities

Our purpose

We inform and empower New Zealanders to experience, understand, create and share content in a positive way, while safeguarding our tamariki and rangatahi from harm.

The role of the Classification Office

The Classification Office is an independent media regulator focused on keeping New Zealanders safe in a fast-changing digital world.

We were established by the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (the Classification Act), to classify publications which may need to be restricted or banned, and to provide information about classification decisions and the classification system as a whole.

Once upon a time we were best known for classifying physical media like films released in cinemas and on DVD. That's still part of our job, along with

classifying materials for Crown agencies, but as New Zealanders' media habits have changed our focus has also evolved and broadened.

Today we produce insightful research on current, real-life issues and practical resources to help New Zealanders think critically about the media content they consume and share, and make good choices. Our tamariki and rangatahi need support to thrive in the digital age. We empower whānau and educators to talk with them about challenging content and nurture their critical thinking skills.

Our everyday work, partnerships and global connections give us a clear view of what's working in New Zealand's media regulation, what isn't, and where gaps exist. We're thinking about how the New Zealand Government regulates digital media, and collaborating with government agencies, NGOs and local and international experts on new interventions to help New Zealanders enjoy digital content safely.

Our structure and regulatory functions

The Chief Censor is chief executive of the Classification Office and has special functions under the Classification Act, including the power to 'call in' a publication for classification and to grant exemptions from a restriction. Our current Chief Censor David Shanks was appointed in April 2017.

OUR PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:

1. Classification of publications,
2. Produce and distribute information about the Classification Act and the Office,
3. Provide an Inquiries and Complaints Service, and
4. Carry out research which enables the Office to perform its functions effectively.

The organisation is structured into two main units to deliver on these activities: an Information Unit and a Classification Unit. These teams work together across key projects and are supported by the Corporate Services Unit.

- The Information Unit is managed by the Communications Manager and its functions under the Classification Act are to engage in research, inform and educate the public, and to manage complaints and enquiries.
- The Classification Unit is managed by the Deputy Chief Censor (currently a vacant role), and our team of classification advisors are responsible for assessing publications that are submitted for classification, or called in by the Chief Censor.

Publications submitted to the Classification Office usually include content that deals with sex, horror, crime, cruelty, or violence.

They can be submitted to us by the Film and Video Labelling Body of New Zealand, or directly by commercial applicants, by Crown agencies including the Secretary for Internal Affairs, the Comptroller of Customs, the Commissioner of Police, and the Courts, and by members of the public.

Currently the vast majority of our Crown classification work deals with child sex abuse material. We have also seen a steady increase in violent and potentially extremist material.

Our advisors assess these publications, and if they determine they are harmful to the public good, they will classify them as restricted or banned. When deciding on a classification they must

consider the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, so that any restriction is reasonable, demonstrably justifiable, and the minimum required to prevent harm.

We use the Chief Censor's call in power when we become aware of a publication that may need to be classified as restricted or banned. A good example is *13 Reasons Why* on Netflix, which depicts suicide in graphic way and did not have an adequate age rating or content warning at the time of release. We called it in and issued an RP18 classification with detailed warnings for graphic suicide and rape content.

We also work proactively through negotiation with producers of entertainment content to address instances where consumer information on films, shows and games hasn't adequately warned New Zealanders about the content. Law changes will require commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms to display appropriate New Zealand age ratings and content warnings on all new film and shows from mid-2021.

Accountability and governance

The Classification Office is an independent Crown entity and is subject to the public management and accountability requirements established by the Crown Entities Act 2004 (CE Act).

The Minister of Internal Affairs is the responsible Minister in accordance with the CE Act, and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) is the monitoring department and is currently responsible for the administration of the Classification Act.

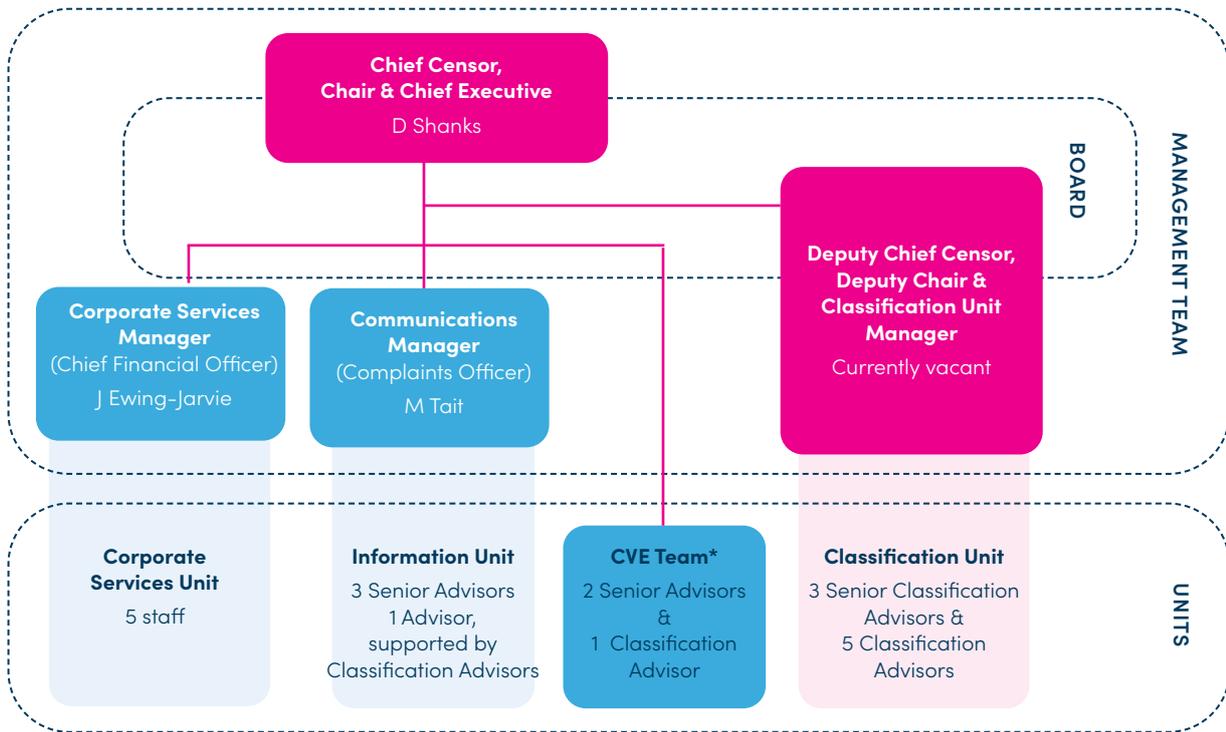
The Chief Censor is constitutionally accountable to the Minister of Internal Affairs for the financial and non-financial performance of the Office.

FUNDING OF THE OFFICE

The Classification Office receives Crown funding under Vote: Internal Affairs, Non-Departmental Output Expense 'Classification of Films, Videos, and Publications', as well as fees from the submission of commercial publications for classification.

At the time of writing, DIA is consulting with industry on changes to regulations which include changes to allow the Classification Office to charge the major commercial video on-demand and streaming platform providers in the New Zealand fees and/or a levy. This follows law changes that will bring these digital entertainment platforms into New Zealand's classification system from mid-2021, with the fees/levy designed to help cover the cost of our new functions in this area.

Figure 1: Classification Office Organisational Chart



*The CVE Team (Countering Violent Extremism) reports directly to the Chief Censor.

Figure 2: Explanation of the Classification Process

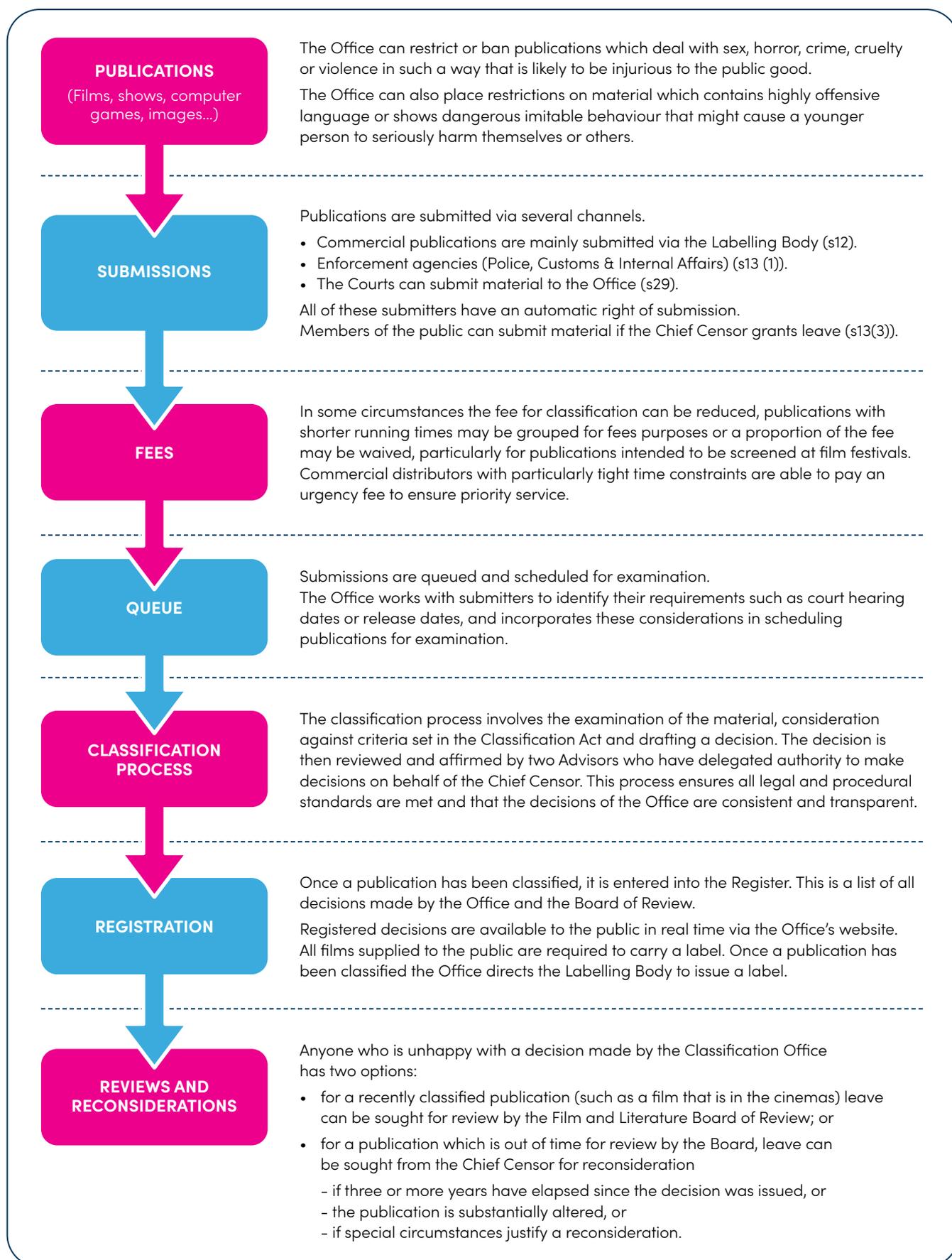
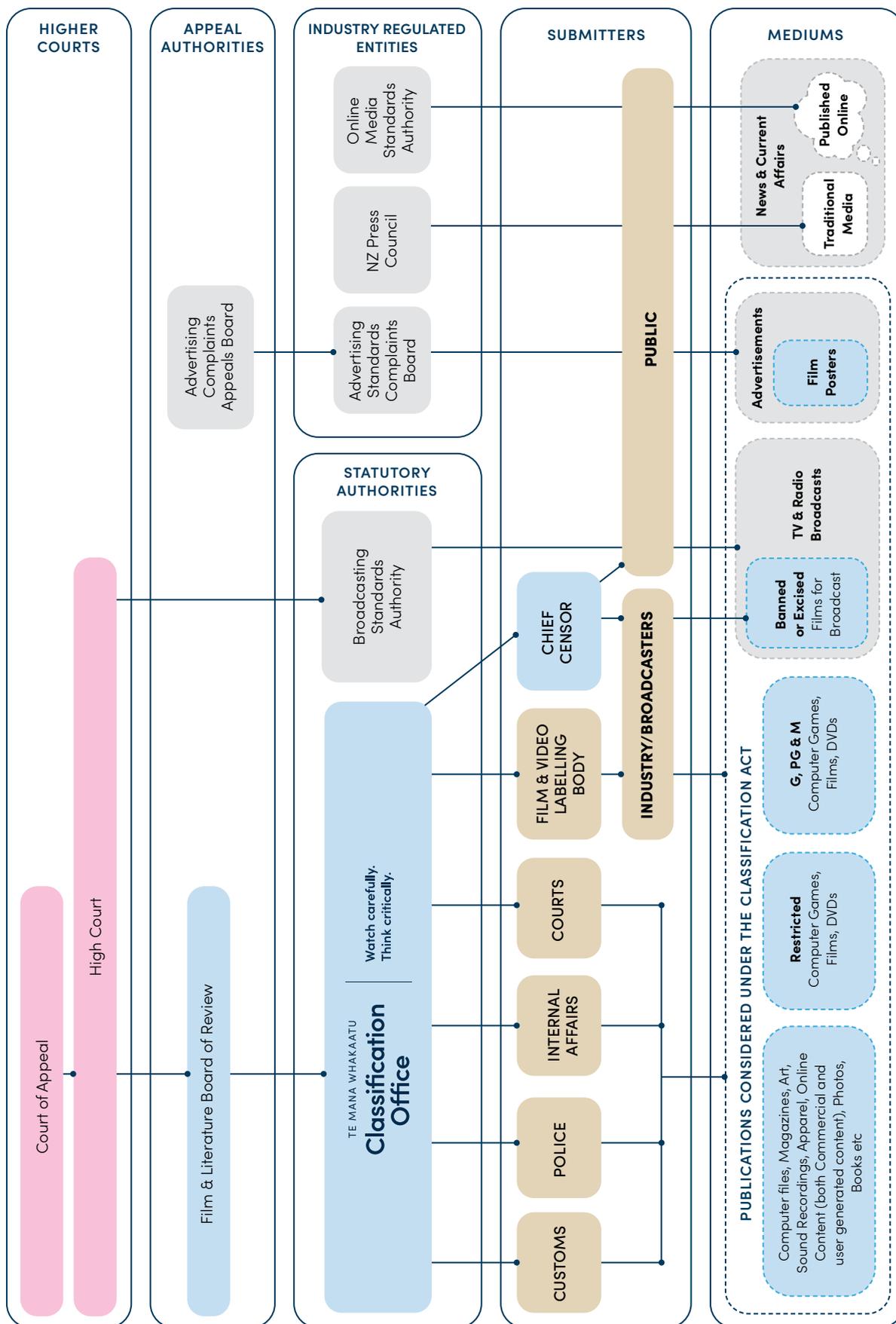
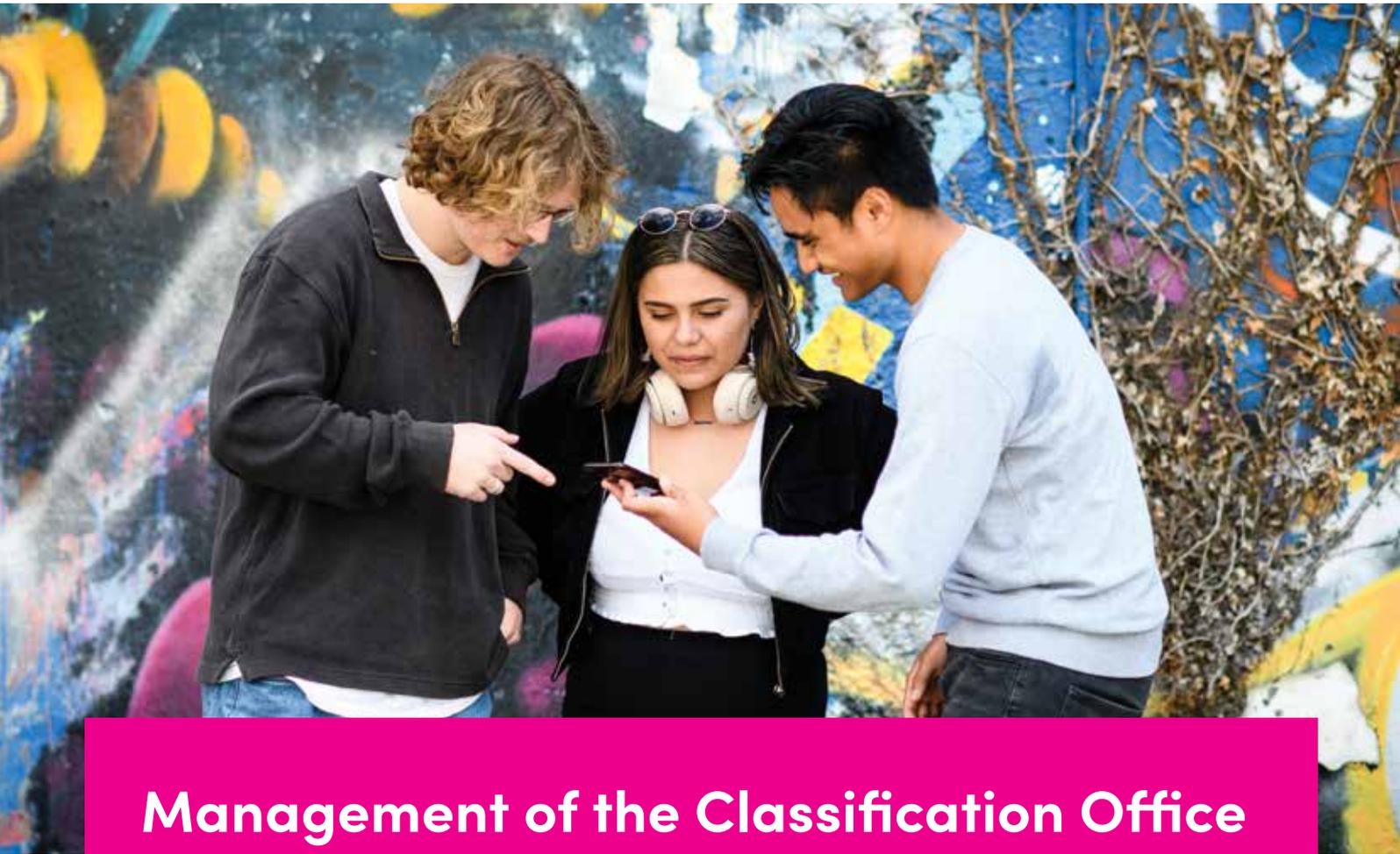


Figure 3: Regulatory Environment





Management of the Classification Office

This section sets out how the Classification Office will use its resources to do its job in the current environment, and reflect the Government's priorities.

The Government's priorities

While recognising the Classification Office's independence from Government the Statement of Intent aligns with the Government's priorities as well as those of the Minister of Internal Affairs.

The Government's priorities are to put the wellbeing of people and the environment at the centre of what it does, and to introduce policies that will allow the economy to work smarter and make better use of our resources, and to ensure that the benefits of growth are spread more evenly across society.

The Classification Office will work to support the Government's, and the Minister's priorities, by continually improving our approach to the stewardship of the Office, working with Government and industry on the development and implementation of new media content legislation, and ensuring we continue to maintain our service delivery standards with a high level of accountability and transparency.

Regulatory environment

New Zealand's regulatory system for media has strong foundations, but over time has become fragmented and out-of-date. It is based on laws that reflect a pre-internet world, and includes agencies with different mandates and significant gaps around managing digital media.

Targeted law reform is currently underway to manage harms from digital media, including:

- The law changes that will require commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms to display appropriate New Zealand consumer information on all films and shows from mid-2021.
- Introduction of a new Amendment Bill enabling measures to help counter violent extremist content.

Last term the former Minister of Internal Affairs, Tracey Martin, signalled the need for a broad review of New Zealand's media regulation. We support a first-principles review to ensure the regulatory system as a whole is fit for purpose and achieves the following aims:

- Reduces harm to New Zealand families from exposure to potentially harmful entertainment media
- Supports the right of Kiwis to make an informed choice about what they, and those they care for, watch and play
- Supports the right to freedom of expression
- Reflects the attitudes and values of our nation.

Social, economic and technological environment

Recently we've seen radical shifts in the social, economic and technological environments.

COVID-19 has impacted every country in complex ways we are yet to fully understand. In New Zealand, the economy, businesses, government agencies, non-profit organisations, families, and individuals have all been put under immense pressure.

Fear and pressure have influenced behaviour, and we've seen a tidal wave of fake news, disinformation and conspiracies theories appear on digital platforms, as well as a concerning rise in violent extremist activity.

Critical thinking is needed more than ever, along with regulatory tools and other interventions that are designed for these times.

Our key areas of focus

As well as supporting system change, our efforts in 2021-2024 will focus on the following key priorities:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

We've stepped up our focus on education and outreach, and will continue to channel significant effort into these areas. This includes supporting New Zealanders to engage with digital media in a conscious and critical way, and providing parents with practical advice and tools to help their kids stay safe online. We'll also continue to produce evidence-based resources and training for educators and front-line service providers.

Our engagement work ensures we connect with the communities we serve and informs our research, development of resources and classification decisions.

We'll continue to prioritise engagement with young people through our Youth Advisory Panel, Censor For A Day schools programme, and active presence on social media. We are also focused on growing our engagement with Māori and Pasifika communities – for example in the design and participation of our research.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND EDUCATION

The spread of mis/disinformation encompasses a broad set of issues that no single agency has responsibility for. We believe that responding to these complex and cross-cutting issues requires a connected-up approach amongst government agencies with regulatory oversight, alongside non-government organisations, educators, mainstream media organisations and community groups, while at the same time supporting and engaging the public.

The Classification Office has no mandate to restrict or ban content simply on the basis of fairness, balance or accuracy. However, we do have a mandate to restrict material that could encourage behaviour that poses a risk of self-harm or harm to others, and material that is promotional of criminal, terrorist or violent acts.

Worldwide, evidence seems to be accumulating of conspiracy theories contributing to violent or criminal actions. In the NZ context we have seen an increase in attacks on cell towers which appear to be correlated with the appearance of 5G conspiracy theories. Additional funding received in 2019/20 enabled the Classification Office to establish a dedicated team working on countering violent extremism, with a focus on dealing with online content promoting terrorism and violence. The initial work of this team has highlighted the linkages between mis/disinformation and extremist material, and identified this as an area that we need to understand more fully.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

We've recently digitised our classification process as part of our work to support the implementation of law changes for commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms. This creates an opportunity to use this intellectual property across a wide range of digital media platforms in the future.

We have also connected with world-leading age verification technology experts, to evaluate how we could use this emerging technology to help prevent underage access to online porn. Age verification technology could also be used to limit access by children to other adult products online. We'll continue to evaluate the latest international thinking in this area.

The public's perspective on the classification system

The Classification Office runs a survey every five years on the public's understanding of the classification system, including how they view and use it, and their concerns. This was last carried out in 2016, and so will be repeated during the course of this Statement of Intent – against a vastly changed media and regulatory environment.

We recognise that the media landscape changes fast, so we've also run a number of smaller surveys over this time to support our understanding of New Zealanders' perspectives and guide our work.

WHAT TYPE OF MEDIA CONTENT MOST CONCERNS NEW ZEALANDERS?

- 75% of New Zealanders are concerned about children and young peoples' exposure to content in entertainment media. Those with dependent children are more likely to be concerned (84%).
- Levels of concern about some types of content are higher. 85% are concerned about violent content in entertainment media, and 83% about sexual content.
- Other content that concerned survey participants was offensive language and horror/supernatural content. Participants also expressed concern for racist content, reality TV, cruel and immoral content.

More recently our engagement with young people tells us that they are concerned about how content deals with the subject of suicide and shows self-harm.

Source: *Results are from the December 2016 UMR Online Omnibus survey. This was a nationally representative survey of 1,000 New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.*

WHAT DO KIWIS THINK ABOUT OUR CLASSIFICATIONS?

- 92% of New Zealanders think classifications are important when choosing entertainment for children and teens.
- 73% think classifications are 'about right' – not too strict or too lenient.
- 69% think the Classification Office is doing a 'good' or 'excellent' job.

Source: *Understanding the Classification System: New Zealanders' views (June 2016), Prepared with Colmar Brunton based on a survey sample of 1,000.*

The current fiscal environment

The entertainment media industry is changing fast, with big shift toward digital platforms and new players entering the market. The COVID-19 pandemic is also impacting the industry in significant and complex ways, with people watching and playing more entertainment than ever at home, and the production of films and shows becoming more difficult.

Law changes for the major commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms in New Zealand come into effect from mid-2021, and will require these providers to display appropriate New Zealand age ratings and content warnings on all films and shows.

The costs for providers are unlikely to significantly impact the market in New Zealand, yet will help to recover the cost of our activities to manage harm from content on these platforms. These activities are being subsidised, with the Crown funding 25% of the costs of operating the new framework.

Amendments to the Classification Act

In August 2020 amendments to the Classification Act introduced new rating and labelling requirements for commercial video on-demand content. The Classification Office received funding to develop a self-rating framework and will be responsible for approving self-rating systems used by CVoD providers. During 2019/20 the Classification Office developed the business logic and an online tool to assist CVOD providers comply with their new obligations. Over 2020/21 we are developing and implementing the business processes which will support the approval and review processes. The main provisions come into force in August 2021.

Further amendments to the Classification Act have been developed as part of a suite of Government initiatives responding to the responding to the 15 March Terror Attacks. The Amendment Bill proposes a government-controlled filter to detect and block online content that is, or is likely to be, objectionable (banned); makes it an offence to livestream objectionable content; and enables DIA to issue "takedown notices" to an online content host.

Organisational health and capability

FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THE CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

The Office's baseline funding was reviewed in 2019/20. As a result our funding was increased and this has put the Office in a sustainable financial position by

addressing the ongoing reduction in income from traditional classification activities.

The new baseline also partially funds the Classification Office's new functions established by the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification (Commercial Video on-Demand) Amendment Act 2020 and supports the work programme resulting from commitments to the Christchurch Call to counter violent extremist content online. At the time of writing a third party funding regime associated with the Commercial Video on Demand activity is under development and Department of Internal Affairs is developing advice for the Minister, following consultation with CVoD providers.

CLASSIFICATION ACTIVITY

In recent years there has been a continued decline in commercial publications being submitted for classification. This decline is most evident in reduced DVD submissions, and more recently the number of games being released as a physical product. In the current COVID climate there has also been a reduction in cinematic releases requiring classification. This is due to both domestic restrictions on public gathering, and internationally, with a slowdown in the film production industry. While this reduction is likely to be temporary, it is expected to impact on volumes beyond 2020/21.

This will be balanced to some extent when commercial video on-demand and streaming platforms are brought into New Zealand's classification system from mid-2021 – although our focus will mainly be on supporting the development and maintenance of self-rating systems.

Submissions from Crown agencies have been comparatively stable in recent years, with 624 publications classified in the 2019/2020 financial year, 418 in 2018/2019 and 699 in 2017/2018. This is forecast to change as a result of increased focus on responding to extremist and terrorist activity. Both the newly established Digital Violent Extremism (DVE) Unit within DIA and Police investigations and prosecutions will drive classification activity.

Key events in New Zealand have increased public interest in the classification system, including our work to ban the Christchurch terrorist's livestream video and document 'The Great Replacement', our classification of the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, and public concern around the computer games such as *Rape Day* and *Fortnite* as well as age ratings and content warnings on other on-demand content such as *Cuties* and *365 Days*.

HEALTH OF OUR STAFF

We are entering a period of pronounced change for our staff as we work to implement changes to the Classification Act and support work on further proposed

changes. Our classification staff work across a range of areas which has the benefit of maintaining capacity and flexibility within the Classification team, while providing a healthy work balance for staff.

The nature of our classification work is often demanding on staff. There is a risk of harm to staff who work in an environment where they are exposed to objectionable material, if this isn't managed carefully and well. We ensure staff receive suitable peer and professional support, and we regularly review how we can best support our team.

Management of significant relationships

Our work is having real impact, yet the challenges we're up against run deep and we are continuing to see rapidly evolving harms from digital media.

A collaborative effort is needed with New Zealand's regulators, enforcement agencies, experts and NGOs all acting in alignment and connecting with international thought-leaders. This is vital, as the actions we take now to manage harm from digital media will powerfully impact the experience tamariki have growing up in these times.

As the Classification Act balances the freedom of expression with protection from injury we also need to maintain strong, positive relationships with both enforcement agencies and those with commercial interests. By working with these parties and identifying our common ground, we can best help the public we serve.

Integrity of the classification system

In the work we do it's vital that we strive to achieve the right balance between protecting people's freedoms of speech, expression and privacy, and keeping New Zealanders safe from harm when they access media content.

New Zealanders must have confidence in both the integrity of the classification system, and in the Classification Office as an effective and impartial provider of classification and information services.

One of the most important ways we can achieve these outcomes is by performing our functions to a high standard and in a transparent, legal and accountable way. Our most recent surveys indicate that the public trusts our work and largely agrees with our classification decisions. We will keep striving to improve these results.

We are also focused on continuing to seek out the diverse views of New Zealanders to inform our work, including in particular, through engagement with rangatahi, Māori and Pasifika.



Measuring our performance

Our role is to support New Zealanders to access media content in a positive way, with a particular focus on protecting tamariki and rangatahi from harm. We are tasked with doing this while recognising the diverse views of all New Zealanders and upholding the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Any limits we place on freedom of expression through classifications need to be reasonable, clearly defined in law, and demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society.

Parliament has given the Classification Office the responsibility of using the law to determine where limits on New Zealanders' freedom of expression rest. There is often some grey area between what

is and isn't legally acceptable expression, and our classification advisors need to navigate these decisions with care.

Figure 4 shows the intended impacts of our activities and how these contribute to our purpose.

Figure 4: Performance Framework



Evaluation of our purpose

Measuring the impact of our work in reducing harm to New Zealanders from media is challenging. We use the results from the Local Government Quality of Life Survey as a proxy, which is supported by key findings from our research surveys.

From the Quality of Life Survey we use the percentage of people who feel that they, and their children are safe in their homes and neighbourhoods as an indicator for a sense of safety.

SOME FINDINGS FROM OUR MOST RECENT RESEARCH INCLUDE:

- 84% of New Zealanders with dependent children are guided by age restrictions on labels most or all of the time.

Source: *Attitudes towards classification labels, UMR research, 2015*

- 92% think classifications are important when choosing entertainment for children and young people.

Source: *Understanding the classification system: New Zealanders' views, Colmar Brunton, 2016*

- 76% are concerned about children and young peoples' exposure to content in entertainment media, and those with dependent children are more likely to be concerned (84%).

Source: *Children and teen exposure to media content, UMR research, 2016*

These findings reflect the value of classifications in helping New Zealanders make good viewing choices – particularly for parents, whānau and others who care for children.

Our work is also increasingly focused on supporting New Zealanders to think critically about a wide range of content on digital media platforms – not only entertainment content, but also fake news, disinformation and even violent extremist materials. We do not yet have measures that reflect our progress on these important areas of focus.

Evaluation of our impact

IMPACT A: THE PUBLIC HAS GREATER CONFIDENCE IN THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Our survey to understand public knowledge and use of the classification system shows a continued increase in confidence in the system. From 2021 this survey will be conducted three yearly.

% of respondents that said the system was:	2016	2011	2006
'About right'	73%	69%	64%
'Too lenient'	18%	23%	25%
'Too strict'	9%	8%	11%

Figure 5: Importance of classification information in viewing decisions

Viewing decisions for children and young people	2016	2011	2006
Classifications	92%	92%	85%
Descriptive notes	91%	90%	85%

Indicator: 60% or more of those surveyed indicate that they are satisfied with the classification system, because they are of the view that it is neither too lenient nor too strict.

Indicator: An increasing proportion of those surveyed indicate that they use classification information when making viewing choices for children.

The Office has investigated participants' use of the classification system. Almost two-thirds said they have used it when they have chosen, or helped to choose, a film, DVD or game for a child or young person.

We also asked participants to indicate how important classifications and descriptive notes are when they were making these choices. Our findings are set out in Figure 5.

IMPACT B: THE PUBLIC IS BETTER EDUCATED AND INFORMED ABOUT THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

We have significantly increased our focus on information, education and outreach. Our aim in doing this is to help New Zealanders think critically about media content, and to support parents, whānau, educators and front-line services with practical advice and tools to protect tamariki and rangatahi from harm on digital media and nurture their critical thinking skills.

We're also focused on increasing public understanding of the classification system and key censorship issues that impact on society.

Young people can be particularly impacted by what they see, hear and read on digital platforms. We actively engage with young New Zealanders through our Youth Advisory Panel, Censor For A Day secondary schools programme, and social media channels.

The Classification Office also provides speakers on request to schools, other educational institutions and community groups.

We monitor the effectiveness of these activities by engagement on our website, including downloads of resources, e-newsletter subscriptions, engagement on social media, speaking requests, and informed queries from the public and industry. Some of these items are used as performance indicators at the Activity level.

Indicator:

Our five-yearly survey of the public gives us a read on people's engagement with our work and their understanding of the classification system. We track the level of recognition and understanding classification labels.

A drop in this indicator was correlated with a proliferation of alternative labelling systems for movies and shows in the online space. Changes in the regulation of commercial video on-demand content is expected to improve public awareness and understanding of content warnings.

Evaluation of our activities

ACTIVITY 1 - CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS ARE PRODUCED

Description:

This activity is concerned with the examination and classification of publications in accordance with the law.

Context:

A classification is a legal statement about the status of a publication that may place limits on its availability or invoke criminal sanctions. It is essential that classifications are carried out in a robust decision-making environment to ensure that consistent, impartial and lawful decisions are made.

Classification decision-making is informed by research, expert advice and public consultation.

Quantity of Classifications

The number of classifications registered varies each year, and is largely a demand-driven activity. The leave of the Chief Censor is not required for most submissions and classification is compulsory for films, DVDs, and for electronic games that contain content that may be restricted.

Each financial year the Classification Office estimates the number of publications it expects to receive. This is done on the basis of trends in the level of activity of

previous years and, where possible, discussion with submitters on the number of publications they expect to submit in the upcoming year. On the basis of this estimate, the Office establishes targets for the number of publications which will be classified. The Office expects to meet demand, where resources allow.

Quality of Classifications

The Office measures and reports on the two aspects of the quality of our decisions.

The Office's Practice Manual sets out all the relevant sections of the Classification Act and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, as well as setting out processes which must be followed in the classification of publications. Compliance with this quality standard is reviewed via sampling on a monthly basis across all submission channels and reported internally and externally.

A representative sample of decisions is independently reviewed, to ensure the decisions are written in a style which is accessible to a range of readers and that the analysis supports the classification decision, so that the reader understands the reasoning of the decision.

Timeliness of Classifications

Section 23 of the Classification Act requires the Office to examine and classify publications as soon as practicable. The Office has set the timeliness targets at the minimum level acceptable with existing resources and assumes that the numbers of submissions are within the estimated range.

The Office closely manages its queue of publications waiting examination, and scheduling of work is reviewed weekly. This includes consideration of the needs of various submitters and distributors.

The Office liaises with the Film and Video Labelling Body, distributors, Crown agencies and other submitters on scheduling matters.

ACTIVITY 2 - INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLASSIFICATION ACT AND THE OFFICE IS PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED

Description:

Section 88(2)(b) of the Classification Act requires the Classification Office's Information Unit to disseminate information about the functions, powers and procedures of the Office.

This activity is concerned with public engagement and the production and distribution of information about the Classification Act and the Classification Office.

Further details of these activities are discussed under Impact B on page 17.

Context:

The public good is protected when people understand the classification system, can access the information they need to make informed viewing decisions, and when the Classification Office operates in a transparent manner.

In order for this to occur, the public must understand the classification system and the potential for harm caused by the availability of such material.

ACTIVITY 3 - AN INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS SERVICE IS PROVIDED

Description:

This activity is concerned with the provision of the inquiries and complaints service required under s88 of the Classification Act.

Context:

Censorship places limits on the individual's right to free expression. For this reason, it is important that people are able to seek information about the classification system, and able to register their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it.

For each financial year the Office estimates, on the basis of previous trends, the number of complaints and inquiries likely to be received. From this estimate the Office establishes Quantity targets for the number of inquiries the Office will answer. The Office expects to meet demand, where resources allow.

The Office responds to trends in complaints and inquiries with tailored information. This strategy has been effective as demonstrated by a reduction in certain categories of complaints and inquiries over time.

The Office monitors and reports monthly on inquiries and complaints received, both internally and externally.

ACTIVITY 4 - RESEARCH IS CARRIED OUT WHICH ENABLES THE OFFICE TO PERFORM ITS FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

Description:

Section 88(2)(a) of the Classification Act requires the Classification Office's Information Unit to provide research services to enable the Office to perform its functions effectively.

Research which helps inform the wider public about censorship issues is published and made available on the Classification Office's website. It is also used to inform our work, contribute to debate, foster further research on censorship issues and provide an evidentiary base for censorship policy making.

The research we do will be rigorous, ethical, of high quality, and when appropriate, reviewed by an external expert.

Context:

Research undertaken by the Office falls into three categories:

- To inform the wider public about censorship issues. This research assists in understanding people's attitudes and behaviours, fosters debate and provides an evidence base to censorship policy making.
- To inform the classification decision making process in relation to a specific publication or range of publications.
- To provide qualitative and quantitative measurement of the impact of the work of the Office.

Statement of Responsibility

The Statement of Intent for the Classification Office presented in this report for the years ending 30 June 2021 to 30 June 2024 has been prepared in accordance with section 38 of the Public Finance Act 1989 and the Crown Entities Act 2004.

This Statement is to be read in conjunction with the Classification Office's Statement of Performance Expectations for the relevant year, which provides specific performance measures and associated financial information.

The Chairperson of the Board of the Classification Office acknowledges, in signing this statement, that they are responsible for the information contained in this Statement of Intent.



David Shanks - Chief Censor

On behalf of the Board of the Classification Office.

Dated: 28 February 2021

TE MANA WHAKAATU
**Classification
Office**

**Watch carefully.
Think critically.**